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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 272154Z JUN 06
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0901
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5354
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 6561

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 002216

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RECALL OF PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

¶1. Summary: All major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies gave significant reporting and editorial coverage to the Legislative Yuan's (LY) vote on the presidential recall motion June 27, and on possible conflicts between pan-Blue and pan-Green supporters outside the Legislative Yuan. All papers front-paged the recall vote, and the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on page two that said "Bian: Will Respect Result of Recall Vote." The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" carried results of its latest poll on page two, which showed that 67.59 percent of those polled said they hope that the Legislative Yuan will pass the presidential recall, while 66.51 percent of respondents said they don't think the bill will be passed.

¶2. Almost all papers editorialized on the presidential recall vote today. The "Free Talk" column in the "Liberty Times" said the major battlefield in the Blue and Green confrontation today is not in the Legislative Yuan but on the streets, and that the side that can remain calm, exercise restraint, and bring peace and order to the people will be the final winner. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said the recall motion is actually part of a "long war" in the runup to the 2008 presidential election. An "Apple Daily" opinion piece said that even though Washington said it will respect the results of today's recall vote, it may not be happy to see the recall passed and a referendum to oust Chen held. An editorial in the pro-status quo "China Times" said no matter what the results of the presidential recall vote may be, it will leave an important record in Taiwan's constitutional history. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" blasted the DPP for defending Chen and his corrupt practices, saying the impression the DPP will leave to Taiwan's society is that it shelters corruption. End summary.

A) "The Real Winner"

The "Free Talk" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] noted (6/27):

"... In fact, during a political uproar, an overwhelming majority of people does not want to see any conflicts; they are also very tired of the political clamor. As a result, as long as any side is willing to yield without using abusive language, it will definitely win the recognition of a majority of the people. The major battlefield for the Blue and Green confrontation today is thus not in the Legislative Yuan, but on the streets. The side that can remain calm, exercise restraint, and bring peace and order to the people will be the final winner."

B) "Recall Bid Harming the Pan-Blues"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation:

30,000] editorialized (6/27):

"The weeks of pan-blue campaigning against President Chen Shui-bian will come to a head today when the legislature votes on the motion to recall him. The fact that the bid was doomed from the beginning doesn't seem to have prevented the pan-blues from continuing with their campaign, oblivious that their actions may actually be causing more damage to Taiwan's reputation than that supposedly caused by the president and his administration. ...

"This latest bid to oust the president and harm the pan-green camp's image can be construed as part of a 'long war' in the runup to the 2008 presidential election. The opposition has placed so much importance on winning back the presidency that the Taiwanese public is in for a long and arduous media crusade against all things green over the next 18 months or so. But will this campaign really serve the best interest of the opposition? ..."

C) "Impact of Recall Motion on U.S.-Taiwan Relations"

Cross-Strait Interflow Prospect Foundation Vice President Raymond Wu opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] (6/27):

"... The United States always believes that confrontation between the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan is a 'manageable dispute' which will not lead to continued unrest or fierce conflicts. ... Washington is thus by no means happy to see that Taiwan's political turmoil will impact the U.S.'s national interests. In particular, following the 'cessation of the National Unification Council' early this year, the unpleasant twists and bumps undergone in U.S.-Taiwan relations have made both sides want to 'recuperate' for a while and prevent any more surprises or conflicts. The changes that might be triggered by Taiwan's political upheavals, especially Beijing's reactions to these changes, always have been a major concern for Washington. At the current stage, the United States is definitely not happy to see any surprise moves or situations that might occur with regard to 'maintaining the status quo,' which would create more trouble for the United States on top of the crises in Iran, Iraq and North Korea. ...

"Given its expectations that the recall controversy will come to an end as early as possible, Washington will respect the result of the Legislative Yuan's vote today. But it might not be happy to see the recall motion move into the next stage - the referendum. On the other hand, even though one cannot be sure if the U.S. government 'will support President Chen to finish his term of office,' Washington definitely does not want to see lasting instability in Taiwan's political situation affecting the U.S. interests, or even give Beijing an excuse or opportunity to directly intervene in Taiwan's politics.

"In the meantime, in order to avoid any disputes between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, the United States also hopes that, having undergone the impact of the recall motion, the DPP government will have lost its original momentum in continuing to push for its constitutional reform plan that includes sensitive issues concerning Taiwan's national flag, national title, and territory. Washington hopes that with the recall motion coming to an end, these highly controversial issues will no longer be brought up by 2008, and will not create any tension or even conflicts in cross-Strait relations or Washington-Beijing-Taipei interactions. ..."

D) "Re-read the President's Inaugural Pledge on the Day of Recall Vote"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (6/27):

"The Legislative Yuan will vote on the presidential recall motion Tuesday. No matter what the result may be, it will leave an important record in Taiwan's constitutional history. For those who either urged the President to step down on his own accord, asked the Legislative Yuan to launch a recall motion, or called for a popular vote to force the President to step down, they all face the doubts of the President and his supporters: Namely, what is their constitutional legitimacy in ousting the President? If there is no

constitutional legitimacy to demand that the President step down, what [the pan-Blue camp has been doing] will be viewed as political struggle, strife that only cares about Blue or Green but does not tell right from wrong. When Ma Ying-jeou went to Kaohsiung for a rally challenging Chen the other day, he directly pointed out that the legitimate reason backing the pan-Blue camp's move to oust the President is that the President's behavior has violated what his people have entrusted to him, and thus has violated the pledge he made in accordance with the Constitution when he was inaugurated. ..."

E) "An Influential Criminal of Black and Gold [Politics], a Sinner of Taiwan Independence"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (6/27):

"... In the face of the recall motion, the DPP could have reasoned with itself that the two-thirds high threshold stipulated by the Constitution [for passing the recall motion] is there to provide room for the DPP to reflect on itself and to reform, and for Chen to confess and repent his sins. If Chen sincerely confesses and repents his sins to the DPP and to all the people, the DPP can give him an opportunity by using the two-thirds threshold to oppose the recall motion. But the DPP got itself into trouble by its schemes; it even defended Chen's corrupt practices and stained 'nativism.' The DPP not only failed to ask Chen to repent but chose to stand by his side, making the whole party Chen's accomplice. The impression that the DPP gave to society is: The DPP shelters corruption, the 'nativists' shelter corruption, and even Taiwan independence shelters corruption! ..."

KEEGAN